



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

NEWS

Region 2 • 3201 Spurgin Road • Missoula, MT 59804

Contact: Vivaca Crowser, Information Officer, (406) 542-5518, vcrowser@mt.gov, fwp.mt.gov/regions/r2/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

FWP Releases Recommendation for Motorboat Rules near Missoula and Opens Comment Period on Personal Watercraft Rule Change

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks released its recommendations that will be made to the FWP Commission and is opening a comment period on a proposal to prohibit personal watercraft on the Bitterroot River and sections of the Clark Fork River. Comments will be accepted through Oct. 7.

FWP received more than 640 comments on proposed changes to the rules that would affect portions of the Bitterroot and Clark Fork Rivers near Missoula and a small section of the Blackfoot just upstream from the former Milltown Dam site. The proposed rules address public safety concerns and social conflicts and would establish some additional sections of the Clark Fork River in the Missoula vicinity that would be either closed to motorized watercraft or limited by horsepower.

The decision to open a seven-day comment period was made to ensure that the public is adequately informed about the recommended changes that would affect personal watercraft. “Although we received numerous comments that specifically expressed concerns about the use of personal watercraft on the Bitterroot and the Clark Fork rivers in the Missoula area, we want to be sure that people are fully aware of the proposal to prohibit this use in the future,” said Pat Saffel, FWP Fisheries Manager in Missoula.

Saffel said most of the comments received during the earlier comment period supported more restrictions to motorized use and generally supported the proposed rule changes. “FWP modified the original proposal for some of the river sections where the

public was more supportive of motorized watercraft and where public safety and social conflicts were less of a concern,” he said.

The one-week comment period applies only to the recommendation to prohibit personal watercraft on the Bitterroot River and sections of the Clark Fork River. Public comment for other portions of the proposed rules closed June 27.

Comments must be received by FWP no later than 5:00 p.m. on Oct. 7. Written comments can be sent by mail to: R2 FWP, Attention: PWC Rule, 3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804 or emailed to R2personalwatercraft@mt.gov. The FWP Commission is scheduled to make a final decision at its meeting on Oct. 13 in Helena.

For details on the personal watercraft proposal or to view the Department’s Environmental Assessment, Decision Notice and final rule recommendations, go to FWP’s website, fwp.mt.gov (“News,” then “Public Notices” and “ARM Rules”). A copy of the Decision Notice is also available at the FWP Missoula office, by emailing shrose@mt.gov, or calling 406-542-5500.

-fwp-